



St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

URN: 138612

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Reverend John Wilson Archbishop of Southwark

12–13 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

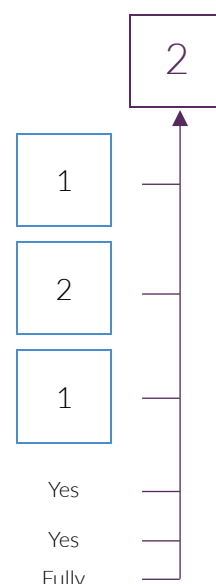
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

- St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference. At least 10% curriculum time is allocated to religious education in all key stages.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Archbishop
- St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School has met fully the areas for improvement from the previous inspection which took place on 10th July 2018.

What the school does well

- St Thomas Becket is an extremely welcoming and inclusive school, where pupils, parents and staff feel happy and supported;
- Pupils speak with confidence about their experiences and can explain fully how they support those in school, in the local church and in the wider world;
- Pupils enjoy learning in religious education, they are enthusiastic, active participants in their lessons;
- St Thomas Becket strives to meet the needs of individuals so that all pupils are included in every aspect of school life;
- The prayer life of the school is wide ranging and creative, enabling all in the community to experience the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition.

What the school needs to improve

- Governors need to develop a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship of the school which supports and challenges school leaders;
- Leaders should build on good practice to ensure opportunities to deepen learning in class discussions and pupils' tasks are not missed;
- Further develop pupils skills to enable them to plan, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy in all key stages.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

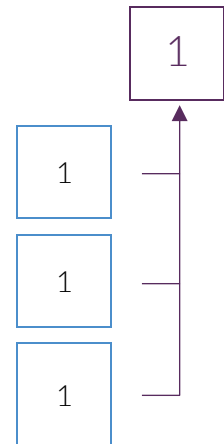
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



St Thomas Becket has a very strong Catholic ethos; it is a place where both faith and learning thrive harmoniously. One parent said ‘the daily encouragement of the children to live their values, walk the talk, and think deeply about what makes them try to live in a Christian way is what really carries’. The sense of ‘the Becket family’ exemplifies the school. Pupils fully understand the school’s mission ‘to become a happy school’, a place where they can ‘be stronger in faith and show unconditional love to each other.’ Pupils are flourishing; they seek to serve the needs of others through many charitable activities. For example, raising money for Cafod, HCPT or collecting warm clothes for winter. Pupils willingly take on leadership roles through the school council, faith leaders and play leaders; older pupils take care of the younger ones. Behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is exemplary. As one pupil said, ‘Jesus was perfect, we can’t be as perfect as him, but we can try our hardest’.

Annually, every class reflects on the school’s mission statement rewriting it in a way that is more understandable. Serving as a constant reminder to live and witness to the school’s mission, these simplified versions are on display and in the pupil’s religious education books. Christ is truly at the heart of this community; the sense of welcome and belonging is tangible. One parent commented, ‘The school community is incredibly collaborative, united, and supportive, creating an environment where people feel valued and respected.’ Staff attended specialised courses enabling one pupil with very particular needs to participate in every aspect of school life. Fireflies provides a safe, supportive environment for pupils needing additional support. Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils, their relationship with each other, and with the pupils bears witness to the school’s Catholic life and mission. The school environment, displays, class prayer tables, statues and crosses in all rooms speak volumes to the mission and identity of the school. In the reception area parents can write prayers in a special book; pupils love the interactive prayer boards, frequently writing beautiful prayers and reflections. Faith leaders take great pride in keeping them tidy and relevant. Using Ten:Ten resources

relationship and health education, interwoven with personal, social, health education, is well planned, meeting statutory and diocesan guidelines.

Leaders and governors are thorough in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission. They are frequent visitors to the school attending school functions such as the nativity and passion plays; there is a mutually respectful relationship between school leaders and governors. Some school policies reflect the Catholic identity and mission, most are due to be reviewed. St Thomas Becket actively embraces the Archbishop's vision, they are seeking to achieve the participator level of the Oscar Romero award. Staff attend diocesan training and moderation. The school strives to include their most vulnerable pupils and families. The active parents' association ensure those facing financial difficulties can attend social events or provide coats and uniform. There is a strong partnership between the school and parish. The parish priest is central to the life of the school, visiting classes and regularly celebrating the sacraments. School leaders and governors are committed to the well-being of staff, regularly seeking their views. New staff are mentored by those more experienced; they can speak to the school counsellor or be directed to appropriate services. Well planned and effective induction of new staff, and continuous professional development of all staff, enables them to participate actively, and contribute fully to the mission and life of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

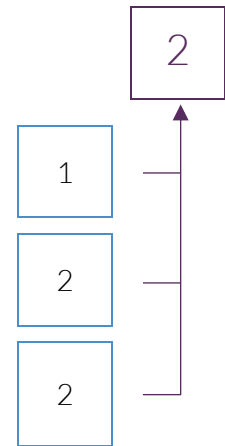
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils really enjoy their religious education lessons because ‘they are fun, help me grow in faith, learn about other faiths and because there are no right or wrong answers’. Over time pupils make consistently good progress; outcomes are excellent reflected not only in high quality work, but also in the school’s data which shows over 80% of pupils are working at or above expected levels, which is on a par with other core subjects. In lessons pupils use religious terms correctly and link them to prior learning and to everyday life. Parents are happy with the religious education provided. One parent commented, ‘My 4-year-old child came home talking passionately about Lent and telling us that we all needed to give up something to show God we loved him’. Behaviour for learning is excellent. Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and enthusiastic; concentration in all lessons is excellent, resulting in high quality work, across a wide variety of activities.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and show a deep commitment to this subject. Expectations are high, consequently teaching is never less than good, some is outstanding. Good questioning elicits thoughtful responses, for example in Reception, pupils were lead gently through an exploration of how people felt when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Skilful, more probing questioning in Year 4 and Year 6 led to ever deepening responses, for example ‘How can we be the best version of ourselves? How does that help me?’ Building on this good practice will ensure opportunities to deepen learning even further are not missed. Carefully designed self-assessment sheets help pupils know how well they are doing. They can talk about the strategies teachers give them to improve, but not fully articulate the steps needed to make the improvements. Pupils particularly value showing good work to the headteacher and achieving a headteacher reward. Attention to task was particularly notable in Year 6 classes where discussions on the meaning of the bread of life in John 12 produced very thoughtful responses. Time for reflection is given in lessons; using quiet music Year 5 pupils reflected on the ‘cost’ of giving; Year 6 pupils considered how our lives are made fruitful by God.

St Thomas Becket follow the '*Come and See*' programme which is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Work is in progress to implement the new *Religious Education Directory* by the due date. The priority given to religious education is reflected in its parity with other core subjects. The subject lead is passionate about the subject; she is deeply committed to the school, the children and her faith. Teachers feel very supported in teaching religious education, with regular training and development provided, such as moderation of pupils' work both in school and across the umbrella trust. Her open-door policy contributes to increasing levels of confidence amongst staff. There are clear strategies in place for monitoring and evaluating religious education, which are used to support and challenge teachers to be even better. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done and what the outcomes should be, but there needs to be more clarity and succinctness relating to the steps need to achieve them. Leaders are aware of the need to develop the enrichment activities in religious education, such as visiting other places of worship and participating in pilgrimage. Governors are kept informed about religious education through an annual presentation by the subject lead, followed by questions. Governors need to develop a robust system for monitoring and evaluating which is supportive and challenging.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

The experience of prayer and liturgy provided by St Thomas Becket engages pupils deeply, leading to full and active participation. From praying the *Hail Holy Queen* to singing *Come and Join the Circle*, to praying spontaneously to say sorry to God, pupils are attentive, respectful and responsive. Experiences of prayer and liturgy are very strong. Careful thought is given to the use candles, silence, scripture and music, not only in prayer but to enhance learning. Year 6 sang *I Am the Bread of Life* as a focus for their learning. Pupils understand the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year; class prayer tables reflect the liturgical colour of the season. Families join in; one parent commented, 'the school encourages prayer and reflection at home with thoughtful initiatives like Posada, Lent in a Bag and the weekly Word on Wednesday'. Another said, 'My son knows prayers, church seasons and enjoys sharing what he has learned in class and collective worship'. Pupils speak warmly and with confidence about their experiences of prayer and liturgy.

Prayer is the beating heart of St Thomas Becket; it permeates every aspect of school life. It is naturally embedded as part of the daily routine. The liturgical life of the Church is deeply ingrained in the life and rhythm of the school. Prayer in class is a balance between traditional prayer and those written by the pupils. Pupils experience the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition. Relevant staff are becoming more confident in helping pupils to plan and prepare prayer and liturgy. Currently, Year 6 pupils work with others to prepare prayer and liturgy for younger pupils, Year 5 present Wednesday Word to all classes; in time all pupils will have the opportunity to plan, prepare and present prayer and liturgy. Throughout the school there are spaces for prayer such as interactive prayer boards and a developing prayer garden. The very strong and flourishing relationship between the school and parish allows full participation of pupils and families in developing and deepening their spirituality.

The prayer and liturgy policy gives a clear picture of the place, and importance of prayer and liturgy at St Thomas Becket, it provides a useful guide when planning prayer and liturgy. There is an excellent

plan in place reflecting the liturgical year and universal church incorporating the Jubilee Year and 'Pilgrims of Hope'. There is also a plan for the formation of staff throughout the year. With the parish priest, who is a frequent and welcome visitor, school leaders plan the school calendar ensuring there are opportunities to celebrate the eucharist on holydays, significant days, saints days and special occasions during the school year. All pupils attend a penitential service in school and can celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent; classes attend morning Mass in the local parish. Mass is regularly celebrated in school at the beginning and end of the school year, leavers day, and the school's feast day. Nativity plays and Year 5 Passion play, as well as the school carol service are celebrated in the parish church. Consequentially, they are easily accessible, relevant and meaningful for everyone including parishioners. Although there is not a separate budget for prayer and liturgy, leaders ensure prayer and liturgy is prioritised in terms of resources, time and staffing. The head teacher reports 'they never want for anything', reflecting the priority given not only to prayer and liturgy but also to the school's Catholic life and mission and religious education. School leaders regularly evaluate the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, including pupils and others in this process, then use this information to continually improve.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138612
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3063403
Full postal address of the school	St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School, Becket Close, Birchanger Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 5BN
School phone number	002086543006
Headteacher	Diarmuid Skehan
Chair of governors	Mark Humphreys
School Website	www.thomasbecket.croydon.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 th July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Patricia Horsman Lead Inspector
 Sam Gower Team Inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

